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TEACHING BY TELEPHONE, AN EXPERIMENT IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.

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PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH IS A REQUIREMENT IN SWEDEN FOR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS. TEACHING BY TELEPHONE WAS EXPERIMENTED WITH IN AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A RESERVE OF THESE TEACHERS WHO WOULD MEET THE REQUIRED PROFICIENCY LEVEL. CANDIDATES WHO PASSED AN INITIAL PROFICIENCY TEST FOLLOWED A COURSE FOR FOUR MONTHS IN WHICH SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL BOOKS WITH TAPES WERE USED, SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS WERE STUDIED, AND 15 TO 20 MINUTE TELEPHONE LESSONS WERE GIVEN EACH SECOND WEEK. THIS ARTICLE DESCRIBES, WITH SPECIFIC DETAILS, THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE, THE INITIAL AND FINAL TESTS OF LANGUAGE SKILLS, THE BASIC COURSE MATERIALS, AND THE PROCEDURES AND CONTENT OF THE TELEPHONE LESSONS. THE RESULTS OF THE TELEPHONE COURSE ARE EVALUATED IN TERMS OF THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEST, AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE PARTICIPANTS. THERE WAS SOME NOTICEABLE GAIN IN PRONUNCIATION FEATURES, AND ALTHOUGH ADVANCEMENT WAS UNEQUAL AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS, SEVERAL FOUND, DESPITE THE UNNATURAL SITUATION WITH THE TELEPHONE, THAT THE TELEPHONE CALLS SERVED AS A GOOD STIMULUS FOR PREPARING THE SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE "INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING," VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2-3, JULY 1967, PAGES 123-139. (SS)

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TEACHING BY TELEPHONE
AN EXPERIMENT IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Max Gorosch

Il s'est trouvé difficile de trouver en Suède un nombre suffisant de maîtres d'école, spécialistes en leur matière et ayant en même temps une connaissance suffisante de l'anglais pour enseigner dans les différents pays où SIDA organise un enseignement scolaire et où l'anglais est utilisé comme langue de contact.

Pour permettre aux candidats aux postes respectifs dans les pays sous-développés de développer leur maîtrise de l'anglais tout en continuant leur travail régulier dans les écoles suédoises en attendant un appel à aller à l'étranger, on a organisé une instruction contenant trois étapes: a) une période de trois mois d'études à la maison sous la direction, par téléphone, d'un professeur; b) un bref cours (une semaine) à Stockholm et c) un séjour de quatre semaines en Angleterre pour pratiquer la "langue en fonction". Des périodes ultérieures de perfectionnement auraient grosso modo la même structure. Le but proposé a été le suivant: a) première étape: connaissance générale de la langue correspondant au niveau de la 9e année de l'école primaire suédoise; b) deuxième étape: exercices auraux-oraux et exercices de structures; vocabulaire et expressions idiomatiques d'un langage spécialisé (en vue du nº c); c) language spécialisé en fonction (en Grande Bretagne).

Le cours par téléphone fut organisé selon le schéma suivant: 1) un test à Stockholm (novembre-décembre); 2) un cours de langue janvier – avril, consistant en un manuel avec instructions et bandes magnétiques, matériaux supplémentaires (feuilles à remplir, etc.) et leçons au téléphone (15–20 minutes toutes les deux semaines, le soir). Le contenu de ces différents éléments est précisé. Ce cours a été terminé par un test final.

L'auteur résume les résultats de cette expérience en 5 points: 1) le cours par téléphone n'implique aucun inconvénient sérieux au point de vue organisation et technique; 2) il s'est trouvé possible de développer un modèle de leçon convenable (aucun temps n'a été perdu au cours de la conversation téléphonique); 3) le test à distance ne s'est pas trouvé moins approprié que les testes donnés en présence des élèves; 4) l'attitude des élèves a été très positive, et la situation téléphonique elle-même a été le meilleur stimulus de travailler; 5) quelques difficultés dans l'évaluation des résultats sont mentionnées. Au point de vue prononciation le niveau est resté inégal. Les corrections par téléphone ont fonctionné comme une espèce d'exercice étendu de laboratoire de langue. Certaines retouches sont à faire dans les matériaux grammaticaux (emploi de *do, did* dans les questions).

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Es hat sich als schwierig erwiesen, in Schweden eine hinreichende Zahl von Lehrern verschiedener Fächer mit genügenden Englischkenntnissen zu finden, die in den Ländern, wo SIDA einen Unterricht organisiert und wo Englisch die Unterrichtssprache ist, unterrichten könnten. Um solchen Lehrern, die sich für eine Stellung in den verschiedenen Entwicklungsländern melden, einen befriedigenden

Unterricht im Englischen bieten zu können, während sie mit ihrer gewöhnlichen Schularbeit in Schweden fortfahren, hat man einen Unterricht in drei Etappen organisiert: a) eine Periode von drei Monaten zu Hause unter der Leitung von einem Lehrer, mit dem man in regelmäßiger Telefonverbindung steht; b) ein kurzer Kurs (eine Woche) in Stockholm, und c) ein Aufenthalt von vier Wochen in England, um die Sprache im Alltag zu üben. Weitere Perioden mit dem gleichen Aufbau werden vorausgesetzt. Das Ziel ist das folgende gewesen: a) erste Etappe: allgemeine Kenntnisse des Englischen, dem neunten Jahr der schwedischen Volksschule entsprechend; b) zweite Etappe: Hör- und Sprechübungen und Strukturdrill, spezialisiertes Vokabular und idiomatische Ausdrücke (für no. c); c) spezialisierte Sprache in Funktion (Großbritannien).

Der Telefonkurs wurde wie folgt organisiert: 1) ein Test in Stockholm (November–Dezember); 2) ein Sprachkurs (Januar–April), bestehend aus einem Handbuch mit Anweisungen und Tonband, Übungsmaterial und Telefonlektionen (15–20 Minuten jede zweite Woche, am Abend). Der Inhalt der verschiedenen Teile wird präzisiert. Der Kurs wurde mit einem Test abgeschlossen.

Vf. faßt die Ergebnisse des Experiments in 5 Punkten zusammen: 1) der Telefonkurs bietet keinen ernsten Nachteil, weder organisatorisch, noch technisch; 2) es war möglich, ein befriedigendes Lektionsmodell zu entwickeln (kein Zeitverlust beim Telefongespräch); der Telefontest ist ebenso gut durchführbar wie Tests mit anwesenden Studierenden; 4) die Einstellung der Studierenden war sehr positiv, und die Telefonsituation war sogar ein ausgezeichneter Arbeitsanreiz; 5) gewisse Schwierigkeiten bei der Beurteilung der Ergebnisse werden erwähnt. Das Niveau der Aussprache blieb ungleichmäßig. Die Korrekturen per Telefon wirkten wie eine Art verlängerter Sprachlaborübungen. Gewisse Verbesserungen im grammatischen Material müssen vorgenommen werden (Gebrauch von *do*, *did* in Fragen).

1. *The Background*

1.1 SIDA has many educational projects, specializing in vocational schools in developing countries where English is used as intermediary language: e. g. Liberia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, India, East- and West Pakistan.

1.2 It has proved difficult to find in Sweden vocational school teachers, experts in their subjects, who have the required proficiency in English. The training of vocational teachers in Sweden does not (as yet) include any instruction in foreign languages. Furthermore, the generation of vocational teachers in question did not learn any foreign language at school, the compulsory teaching of English in primary schools dating (in practice) from about 1952. The compulsory language test which all candidates have to undergo has shown a very low level of language knowledge and skills, sometimes none at all.

1.3 At first, there was a belief that these teachers could be trained in English during the short interval between the signing of the contract and their departure

to the place of duty. Crash courses in the language laboratory, using the latest techniques, were organized in 1963 and 1964. Besides being very expensive, it was found that short intensive training did not yield the results desired: the level of language knowledge and skills required needed more time, and a learning model which allowed more "digestion" and repetition. A crash course was suitable only as a final brush-up and for supplementing a candidate's vocabulary in his special subject, but the starting level had to be a good knowledge of "general English": basic vocabulary and structures, and an acceptable pronunciation.

2. *New Policy–New Learning Model*

2.1 A new policy was formulated: to create a *reserve* of vocational school teachers having the required language proficiency level, and who would be available when a vacancy was announced from a field project.

2.2. A new learning model was devised for this policy, the principal guidelines being:

An analysis of what is, the required language proficiency level for a vocational school teacher in a field project, arriving at as exact and concrete a *definition* as possible.

Defining, on the basis of the above definition, what should be considered as *minimum proficiency* level and what could be considered as an *optimum*.

Spreading the total learning period for the optimum level over a relatively long time, including one part *at home* and another at the *project place* (place of duty).

Defining which aspects of language instruction should be concentrated on during the at-home period, and which during the place of duty period.

Accepting as a requirement before nomination to a post the minimum proficiency level, and organising a course of in-service language instruction that would lead to the optimum proficiency level.

2.3 The at-home language instruction should comprise *three steps:* a) a three months' period of guided-from-a-distance self-instruction with teacher-contact via *telephone;* b) a short, one-week course in Stockholm; c) a four week stay in England for "language in function" practice. Following periods of instruction would have more or less the same build-up. The target to be reached at each stage was roughly defined as follows:

a) First "step": general language to the level of the Swedish primary school 9 th year;
b) Second "step": revision particularly on aural-oral practice and structural exercises; vocabulary and idioms of specialised language (for c).
c) Third "step": specialised language, in function (in Great Britain).

3. *Objectives of the telephone course*

The objectives of this first course were restricted to the following:

3.1 The technical *applicability* of the learning model.

3.2 Development of suitable lesson *models* for the telephone "classroom".

3.3 Development of a "distance" *language test* for continuous and final evaluation of progress made.

3.4 The *attitude* of the learners towards the method of instruction.

3.5 A rough evaluation of the results of the learning.

4. *Main outlines of the telephone course*

4.1 The candidates selected were to pass an initial language proficiency test, in Stockholm, at the SIDA language laboratory, in November–December 1965.

4.2 They were then to follow a language course during January–April 1966 made up of the following components:

1. a self-instruction basic language course book, with tapes.
2. supplementary materials (stencilled loose-leaves to be filed, tapes), a sort of correspondence course.
3. telephone lessons, in periods of about 15–20 minutes, each second week, (1) in the evening.

4.3 The candidates were to take a final language proficiency test after four months, in early May.

4.4 The candidates were to remain in their ordinary jobs and were supposed to give up 6–10 hours a week to the language instruction. They could, on their own initiative (and at their own expense) take lessons with an English teacher or follow a local evening course.

4.5 The cost of the instruction materials and the telephone lessons mentioned under 4.2 1–3, were borne by SIDA; that of the tape recorder by the participant himself.

(1) Telephone rates are relatively low in Sweden: thus, the longest-distance call between Stockholm and Malmberget (north of the Polar Circle), costs 2 : 50 Sw. Cr. per three minutes ($ 0.50 US, 3 sh., 2 Fr. Sw.).

5. *Initial Language Test*

5.1 After the candidates had been selected by the Recruiting Department by means of a general aptitude test, they were subjected to a language test at the SIDA language laboratory, organised by the Instruction Department. The number of selected candidates was 13; the tests were individual and spread over a period of about a month.

5.2 This test had been developed by SIDA's language advisor; its objective was to define the candidate's level of proficiency in English in order to make up an adequate study programme for him. Thus, it had a diagnostic and not a selective purpose.

5.3 *The test situation*

1. The test simulated situations that the candidate would have to face in his future work, so-called "*terminal behaviour*". Thus, it mostly required aural-oral proficiency; the only written performance was the in-service memo. Parts 5.4 2–3 simulated the situations, very frequent in a teacher's life, when he had to prepare a lesson by reading manuals in English, and then use that material in the workshop; many vocational teachers prepared their lessons by writing guidelines.
2. The test was performed in the language advisor's office, and the whole performance was recorded on tape. The microphone was hidden from the candidate, who did not know that he was recorded; the tape recorder was placed in the adjoining room. Furthermore, the situation had more the air of an amiable interview than of a serious test; usually the candidate and the tester had a cup of coffee while the test was going on. The test generally took a whole hour, sometimes a quarter of an hour more.
3. The test was conducted by the language advisor and a test assistant; the latter was a person who spoke no Swedish, but excellent English–all in order to make it seem natural to the candidate to speak English. The test assistant was the "speaker" of the interview, while the language advisor sat at one side, and marked the test battery forms as unnoticeably as possible.
4. The candidates could stop and interrupt the test when they thought they "were not up to that level". Thus, most of them did not attempt parts 5.4. 4 and 5.4. 5.

5.4 *The test programme*

1. General conversation, testing aural comprehension and free oral expression.
2. Reading aloud a short passage of a text of general language, and checking reading comprehension by translation.

3. Reading aloud a short passage of a specialised text, checking pronunciation of technical terms and comprehension of idiomatic expressions and technical words, through translation.
4. Giving a 10-minutes lesson or demonstration, simulating a workshop situation.
5. Writing a short in-service memo, to show his familiarity with standardised report-writing.

5.5 *Evaluation*

After the interview, the language advisor and the test assistant discussed the evaluation, beginning with the essential features: pronunciation of phonemes, accuracy of vocabulary, correctness of forms and structures, and fluency of speech; then, by overall assessment. The Foreign Service Institute Language Test definitions of absolute ratings were used and S–3 Minimum Professional Proficiency was chosen as the required proficiency level.

These definitions read:
"Can participate effectively in all general conversation; can discuss particular interest with reasonable ease; comprehension is quite complete for normal rate of speech; vocabulary is broad enough that he rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker."

A five point scale, where 5 was the highest and 1 the lowest, was used to define the proficiency level of the candidate within the FSI S–3. The average result was 2, some got 1 and some 3; no one got 4 or 5.

6. *Forming the "telephone circle"*

After the test evaluation, the candidates, who lived in various places in Sweden, were given the basic course materials (see below). In accordance with their proficiency level, they started at various points in the progressive chain formed by the course, some at the beginning of Part 1, others at the beginning of Part 2.

Then they received the first set of supplementary materials, consisting of instructions for study. Finally, appointments were made for the first telephone lesson. And so the course was started. In a way, it was like a race in a sports stadium, where the candidates were the runners, the recruitment officers the public, and the instruction officers and language advisor the judges. Every means of advancing rapidly was permitted; the one who had the best placement, when a post in the developing countries was announced, would get in ...

The goal: the final test, three months later. The names and addresses of all participants were put on a list which was distributed to them all, in order to make them feel like members of a "study circle", although they lived in very different places.

7. *Basic course materials*

The basic course materials were "*Let's Look In*", Parts 1 and 2, written by Eiding, Sondelius and Lorna Dowman, and published in Sweden. This basic course is specially conceived for adult learners and covers the vocabulary and grammar (forms and structures) met within everyday English life of to-day. Previous experience—e. g. with Peace Corps volunteers—had shown this course to be efficient for self-instruction.

Each part consists of three books, A, B and Teacher's Book. Book A comprises short text chapters, forming a story (a young Swedish student coming to England), with vocabulary in chronological order after each chapter, a short description of English sounds, and phonetic transcription of the texts.

Book B has three sections. The first one gives a short chapter on grammatical terms, then, chapter by chapter, the grammar (forms and structures), from a contrastive point of view, together with the translation of the whole text. The second section is made up of exercises such as completing sentences, making substitutions, translating and answering questions on the text. The third section is an alphabetical English-Swedish vocabulary.

The Teacher's Book has two sections. In the first, there are valuable hints about conducting classroom teaching with the book, hints that are also very useful for self-instructional purposes. The second gives the "key" to all the exercises of Book B, see above.

SIDA recorded all the texts of Book A (there are no recordings made by the publishers).

For those who finished *Let's Look In 2* before the end of the course, another text-book was foreseen, *John in the Factory*, by ...?, a story about a Swedish boy who visited an English factory; again SIDA had recorded the texts. The content matter was half-way between general and specialised language and covered many technical terms and idiomatic expressions of direct use for the candidates.

8. *Correspondence course materials*

1. This material was sent to the candidates by post, and formed a loose-leaf file, with the following headings:

A. General information about the course; syllabus, administration
B. Instructions and hints concerning the best way to organise the study; see Appendix (in Swedish)
C. Summaries on special chapters: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary; exercises; see Appendix (in Swedish)
D. Test materials
E. Supplementary texts
F. Documentation
G. Varia

2. Under C, the following materials were prepared:

1. A taped lesson on English pronunciation was recorded and sent; it was called *Speed up!*, and urged the candidates to speak more rapidly (Swedes talk more evenly and slowly than the English).
2. Next, a chapter on the imperfect of *do*; as it happened, it was impossible to ask any questions about the texts which used the imperfect tense, without using the form *did*, but for some reason or other, the authors had put that form very late in the course. This was noted by the candidates themselves, who were used to asking questions on the text and could do so, but only in the present tense.
3. Finally, the participants were asked to prepare 10 "*questions on the text*" of the same kind as those used by the teacher in the telephone lesson; some exercises of this type were recorded and stencilled and sent to some of the candidates.
4. Under D, nothing was prepared and sent owing to the fact that there was no time left for the language advisor to prepare tests; furthermore, each telephone lesson proved to be a quite sufficient checking of the candidate's work.
5. Under F, some bibliographical information concerning specialised vocabularies and texts was given, mostly orally, over the telephone. Sometimes, the candidates gave valuable hints about good texts and manuals to the language advisor, who then passed these items around to the other participants.
6. A combined form of exercise and proficiency checking was the free composition of about 100 words which the participants sent to their teacher twice during the course. Like the questions they prepared to put to their teacher, see 8.2.3, it was a *creative* feature. The subjects given were very close to their everyday life: *An evening at home* (to be told in the past tense), and *To-day something happened in my job*. The correction of these compositions took place during the telephone lessons, and only lasted a few minutes.
7. The participants were asked, at the end of the course, how they had organised their language study, and they sent in reports, some of them in English! The instructions and hints in 8. 1 B were rather general and left a choice between several alternatives.

9. *The telephone lessons*

1. The telephone calls were conducted personally by the language advisor, as a teacher, in order to make observations on the method. The calls were scheduled by his secretary, making appointments for each day. It proved almost impossible to place the telephone lessons in ordinary office hours: the vocational school teachers were busy all day in their workshops, with a short break for lunch; besides, it was impossible for them to find the psychological isolation necessary for the concentration demanded by the telephone lesson, where time was limited and they knew that two weeks preparation was to be checked in 15 minutes. Another technical reason was that the workshops were very noisy and

that it was difficult for them to hear what was said over the telephone. So the calls had to be placed in the late afternoon, when both the language advisor and the participants were in their respective homes. The calls were concentrated in a three hour period, during which from three to five lessons were given.

2. The teacher used a special sort of telephone, a box with combined loudspeaker-microphone, which permitted him to use both hands for marking, or handling the books and the papers, etc. This kind of telephone box would have been very useful for the participants too, but for various reasons it was decided that they should use a standard telephone in this first experiment course.

3. The whole lesson was recorded, the telephone being connected to a tape recorder. In order to know from the tape the date of the lesson and the name of the participant, all lessons started in the same way: "Good afternoon, Andersson, to-day is the .. th of ...., and we are going to have our telephone lesson", before part 1 (general conversation) started. In order to keep the questions on the same chapter constant from one participant to the other, the following experiment was made:

1. The questions on a chapter that had been used once and were found, quite definitely, to be easy to understand and answer, see 5 below, were recorded by a native speaker of English.
2. During the lesson, two tape recorders were used by the teacher, A to play back the pre-recorded tape mentioned above, and B to record, via the telephone, both what was played back by A, and what was answered over the telephone by the participant. In this way, it was possible to keep the out-going signal constant and comparison was easier between the response of different participants concerning aural comprehension.

4. A record was kept for each participant of how far he had advanced in the course materials and what he was to prepare for the next lesson. The students formed clusters, three or four studying the same chapter; for each lesson they had to prepare 2–3 chapters. For each lesson, a detailed "interview programme" was made up by the teacher, in order not to waste time during the long-distance calls, and especially in order to use only words and structures known by the candidates. English was used as language of communication, except for part 5 below. These were the recurrent parts of the telephone lesson:

1. General conversation: see Appendix ...
2. Reading aloud a chapter out of the three given as task to prepare, see 4 above; the teacher commented upon errors of pronunciation and gave positive and constructive advice as to good pronunciation.
3. Questions by the teacher, on the text, to show comprehension; excurses on topics treated in the text. The former could, to a certain extent, be foreseen by the participant, see 8.2.3, but not the latter.

4. Description of the pictures of the book, sometimes by questions–answers, sometimes as a narration.
5. Explanatory talk concerning pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar; "talking about language learning".
6. Questions by the participant, a sort of continuation of part 1, but by the participants to the teacher; intended to bring in a *creative* tone, the participant taking the initiative, as he would have to do in real life situations. These questions had to be prepared in advance; the difficulty here being on the part of the teacher, who had to answer in simple English, at their level of comprehension.

5. Questions prepared by the teacher at the beginning of the course for those who were at the advanced level, e. g. at the beginning or middle of Book 2, could be used later on once or twice more when the participants starting at the beginning or middle of Book 1 had advanced. The questions were modified, experience having shown whether they should be formulated in a more concise and easy-to-understand way; thus, these questions were "tested" as to their comprehensibility.

6. The teacher evaluated each telephone lesson immediately after the call, on a special evaluation form. During the lesson, he had been marking off errors and mistakes in pronunciation, vocabulary, and structures. On the basis of these markings and the still fresh memory of the performance, he made his assessment, first a detailed one, then an over-all one, see 5.5. In doubtful cases, he listened to the tapes. The general assessment was then forwarded to the secretary, at SIDA Head-Quarters.

The participants were told if their results were satisfactory; some words of positive appraisal always finished the telephone call, along with some words of encouragement to go on and be confident. This was particulary valuable for those participants who had no other guidance than these calls and had no frame of references concerning their progress. On the other hand, a stern reminder was used when a participant had neglected to prepare his lesson; this only happened twice.

The participants were not told their "ranking"; this was only known to the instruction and recruiting departments.

10. *The final test*

1. The final test followed the same principles as those established for the initial test, and all the parts were also in accordance with the programme of telephone lessons. Teaching was adapted to "terminal behaviour", and the test to the teaching; consequently, the test was adapted to "terminal behaviour".

2. The test was at two levels, representing Book 1 and Book 2; there were eight participants at the first, and five at the second level.

3. The test had the following parts, at both levels:

Form of test	*Kind of proficiency tested*
1. Reading aloud an English text whose vocabulary and structures were contained in Book 1 and Book 2 respectively.	Oral expression guided by written text: reading pronunciation
2. Looking at the text of part 1 and answering questions on it into the microphone; the questions being given on a tape.	Aural and reading comprehension, oral free expression.
3. Translation from English to Swedish of some abstract words and some structures (part of sentences) of the text of part 1.	Exact comprehension of reading vocabulary and structures
4. Picture-guided written description: What can you see in the picture? What is happening in the picture?	Exact and active knowledge of vocabulary, mostly concrete substantives and verbs; spelling.
5. Translation of some Swedish sentences into English, in writing.	Active knowledge of frequent structures by contrast; spelling.

4. The test battery consisted, for each part of the test, of one sheet for the participant, P-form, and one for the evaluator, E-form.

1. For part 1, the P-form was a stencilled sheet where the text was printed on the left 2/3 of the page, without any marking, and with the following instruction to the participant:
   Look through the text, in silence, for one minute. Read the text into the microphone. If you make any mistakes, interrupt your reading and read the words once more.
   The E-form had the text to the left and a broad column to the right for remarks to be made during the test evaluation; at the bottom, there were squares for marking overall features, phonemes, Spelling/Pronunciation, and over-all assessment, in points 1–5.
2. For part 2, there was no P-form, but the questions were pre-recorded on a tape, with the following instruction: Listen to the questions. Stop recorder after each question. Reflect. Start your tape-recorder and record your answer. Always answer with a full sentence. You can look at the text while answering.
   The E-form had, on the left part of the page, the text of the questions, and to the right, a broad column for the remarks of the evaluator; there were sub-

divisions for the following three aspects: comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary + structures. At the bottom of the page: assessment (in words), and assessment of the sub-divisions in points 1–5, and over-all assessment 1–5.

3. For part 3, the P-form had the same text as in 1 and 2 above; some words or expressions were underlined. Instruction: Translate the words we have underlined. Write your answers to the right.
   The E-form was the same, but to the right there was space for marking; at the bottom of the page, there was space for the marking of vocabulary, structures, and for the writing of an overall assessment.
4. Part 4, P-form had two sheets, one with a picture on it, the other with two headings, one at the top of the page, the other in the middle of it, running thus:
   1. What things can you see and what do they look like?
   2. What is going on and what happens? Instruction: Write the answers to the following questions, while looking at the picture.

   The E-form was the same as the second sheet of the P-form, except for having a column for marking. At the bottom: assessment for the first and for the second question, and over-all assessment.
5. Part 5, P-form had two broad columns, leaving a column to the right; the first broad column had the heading: *Swedish sentence,* the other one: *English equivalent.* Instruction: Give the English equivalents of the following Swedish sentences.
   The E-form was the same except for having a heading on the column to the right: Remarks, and at the bottom: Assessment of Vocabulary and Assessment of Structures, and Overall assessment.
6. In addition there was a special form giving a survey of the results of the various testparts of the whole group with name of participant, a column for each part, and squares for the total sum of points.
7. A set of test forms is annexed; they are not exactly the ones used in the final test for the telephone circle, but were developed during and as a result of it; they are certainly of more use than the preliminary ones, and it is of no importance for the test itself which forms were really used.
8. The final test took place at each participant's school; he had procured two tape recorders, A and B; on A he put the prerecorded tape sent to him, on B he put an empty tape, on which he was to record himself. He had also arranged for a witness to be present at the test.
   A certain hour, in the evening, was fixed for the test, and the test battery was to be sent in due time to each participant by mail under sealed envelope.
   At the indicated hour, the test witness was to break the seal and hand over the material to the participant. After the test, the witness was to put the test material in another envelope and mail it back.
   The test was to take at the most two hours.

11. *Evaluation of the results of the telephone course*

This evaluation is based upon the observations and notes made by the language adviser during the course, upon the reports from the participants during and after the course, and upon the final test. Following the order of the objectives enumerated in chapter 3, these are the essential results of the course:

1. *Practical applicability*

Under this heading we shall include the organisation and technical aspects.

Administration was not very difficult for the teacher, who got his schedule from his secretary. The latter, on the other hand, had some difficulties at the outset, due to the fact that the participants had many evenings booked for other activities. After a try-out period, of about four weeks, the schedule was fixed and only small modifications were made from one week to the other. A certain elasticity was attempted at first, permitting those who could not take their telephone call one afternoon, to take it another afternoon, there being two evening "sessions" each week; it was even attempted to change the day for a whole group; or to change one participant from one hour within the evening session to another. But all the these modifications made for a great deal of administrative work, and it was finally decided that the days and hours fixed for each participant should be strictly observed. It appeared that this regularity contributed to the feeling, amongst the participants, that they were taking part in a serious course which had priority in the planning of their leisure hours. Smaller illnesses such as colds did not interrupt the course; this was a great advantage in a climate like the Swedish one.

The teacher had to prepare the lessons in detail; see 9.4. When a certain routine had been established, and especially when he could use materials prepared for previous lessons (which is generally the case in a normal teaching situation), preparation took about half an hour per lesson, and so did the evaluation.

The use of a small, handy transistorized tape recorder proved to be necessary, in order to leave room for all papers and books on the table. Without the box type telephone, which left both hands free, it would have been impossible to conduct the lesson.

The technical quality of the telephone transmission was sometimes very poor, particularly over long distances; in many cases the sound quality of the recording was so bad that it could not be used for checking. The low frequency range, made it particularly difficult to hear students' pronunciation of fricative sounds like, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /f/, on the other hand, it was easier for them to concentrate on pitch, stress and duration, Anyhow, this negative technical feature made it necessary to use the form of distance test described above under 10, and not the telephone.

As for the cost, it could be calculated, for a trained teacher using materials already prepared, on the basis of one hour's fee plus 20 minutes of telephone call. The extra cost of the special telephone was 200: – Sw. Cr. plus 65: – Sw. Cr. per three months.

Leaving aside the financial aspect, the experiment has shown that the telephone lessons offered no serious inconvenience of an organisatory or technical kind, either for the teacher or for the participant.

2. *Development of suitable lesson model*

The telephone classroom model developed during the course has been described under 9.

At first, the participants felt uneasy to sit talking to a teacher whom they could not see. It is difficult for a foreigner to communicate over the telephone, because he cannot complete the purely linguistic signals by using facial expressions, gestures, pointing, etc. But after the first two lessons they got used to the artificial situation, and some even thought it was useful to have the challenge of a difficult communication situation, as it forced them to use clear verbal expression.

The combination of self-instruction-course materials and the loose-leaf file sheets sent by post made it possible for them to get along on their own and to prepare the telephone lesson.

The participants could understand what the teacher said, even if the telephone quality was sometimes poor, and they were satisfied with the way the questions were formulated and the pauses made in order to give them time to find an answer.

The routine established after the first lesson gave them the feeling of confidence and security which they needed—modifications in that routine would have been difficult, as it would have required time for instruction and for their adaptation to it. Such a variation of routine, recommendable in normal classroom practice, would not have been suitable in these telephone classes. The instructions given by mail prepared the routine of the telephone lesson, and no time was wasted during the call itself.

3. *Development of a "distance test"*

The distance test described in 10 proved to be easy to apply by the participants. All schools had the required equipment, it was not difficult to find a colleague to be "test witness", and the formalities in connection with the test were performed without any trouble. The test battery arrived in time to each locality.

The instructions concerning the test situation, e.g. to have two tape recorders, at least for one part, and to use one for play-back of the questions of the aural comprehension part (2) were clear, and the participants were used to such equipment from their school work. Thus, this part of the test situation, which is very important—the tested person should be able to concentrate on the

test and should not be distracted by equipment—was quite satisfactory. The test was finished in the time indicated, except in one case, where the over-run, 15 minutes, was indicated by the participant himself. The instructions given on tape or on the forms were clearly understood, without hesitation, so that the participants knew immediately what was expected from them.

Packing up the tapes in the boxes and sending them back was performed in a correct way in eleven cases and in a wrong way in two, as has been mentioned before. Coloured markings should have been used, to avoid possible storage mistakes at the language laboratory. Tapes which gave the questions of the above-mentioned aural comprehension test part, existed in 13 copies, and were not to be used in another test. These would have gone to the bulk eraser; but by chance they were not erased immediately, and in the meantime it was discovered that some of the boxes marked B contained tape from boxes marked A. The mistake on the part of the tested person, or the witness, is excusable, as both must have been in a hurry to finish the performance, which took place in the late evening, from 7 to 9 p. m.

The evaluation took time and presented some problems, as all evaluation in language experiments of a realistic kind. The written parts were soon corrected and evaluated, the recorded parts had to be listened to and evaluated carefully, which took much more time. This experiment showed where some of the problems of language test evaluation lie, but did not bring about definite solutions. A rough over-all assessment was the one that prevailed, as for the aural-oral performances. But the forms used to evaluate seemed easy to handle, and improvements were suggested during the work.

The most serious and essential problems with a language test, their objectivity, their validity and their reliability, are still to be solved, but this distance test seemed at least not more unsuitable than others made in presence of the test team. And that was the point to prove!

4. *The attitude of the participants*

1. The participants had a clearly positive attitude to the learning model represented by the telephone circle.

As essential advantages over the ordinary "study circle", they mentioned: a) It was a method which made it possible for them to be with their family after having come home from work, and it could easily be fitted into their daily lives; b) It was possible to get qualified guidance even when living in very remote places—they had a feeling that this method broke their cultural isolation; c) They had a 15—20 minutes intensive private lesson, alone with their teacher, while in a study circle of 6—10 participants, the time the teacher could give up to each participant would have been less; d) They could follow their own learning rate using the self-instructional materials.

As essential drawbacks, they mentioned: a) It was an unnatural situation, at least at first, to sit talking to an "absent" teacher, but that feeling was over-

come by the third lesson; b) They had to make very thorough preparations in order to be at their best during the short telephone lesson, and anticipated the lesson with a certain nervousness.

The role of the telephone call was stated thus spontaneously by three different participants, during the lessons: "If it had not been for the fear of making a bad impression during the telephone call, I would not have prepared the lesson so well; and if the telephone call had not been arranged, I would never have been able to continue the self-instructional course, because there were always so many other things cropping up that I would have felt to be more urgent. Thus, the telephone call is the best stimulus to get along."

5. *Results of the learning*

1. It is very difficult to make an evaluation of the results of the telephone course as for gain in language proficiency.

First, the test batteries were not the same in the initial and the final test. Second, the learners added all sorts of extra guidance to the telephone course: some had wives and children who helped them (the wives being primary or even secondary school teachers, and the children studying at grammar schools, both being quite proficient in English), others joined study circles.

2. The following concrete observations were made as for gain in pronunciation:

a) "Overt knowledge" concerning pronunciation had a positive effect, which was proved by the taped lesson "Speed up" mentioned under 8.2; it had an immediate effect, and not only on the speed, but also on intonation and on the pronunciation of segmental phonemes in non-stressed position. The same effect was produced by the corrections made during the telephone lessons, as those in the language laboratory: they told the participant that an item of pronunciation was wrong, told him how it should be pronounced, made him listen attentively to the correct pronunciation and pointed out for the first time the difference. Making him repeat the correct pronunciation naturally had a positive effect. In a way, the telephone call took the form of an extended language laboratory exercise.

b) The gain was very unequal among the participants, some imitating almost immediately in a better way, others continuing to make the same errors. The spread in gain was less, however, in the case of "Speed up" than in intonation. Anyhow, it can be said that in this small population of 13 participants, at an age ranging from 35 to 50, there was some noticeable gain in some pronunciation features, if not in all.

3. A concrete observation concerning structures could be made when the supplementary materials about *did* introducing questions were sent, see 8.2. Earlier in the book, the form *do* introducing questions had been taught; some

of the participants grasped it, and put it into practice, without much trouble. They were the same who could immediately profit by the "correspondence" lesson on *did*. Others could not easily handle either the present or the imperfect form. It would seem, therefore, that the difficulty lies in once grasping and practising the underlying principle; after having grasped it in the present tense, it is very easy to apply it to the imperfect. The authors of the book would perhaps have done better introducing *did* in questions much earlier, especially was it proved to be quite impossible to formulate any "natural" questions on the text, except using verbs not requiring the *do* construction.

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